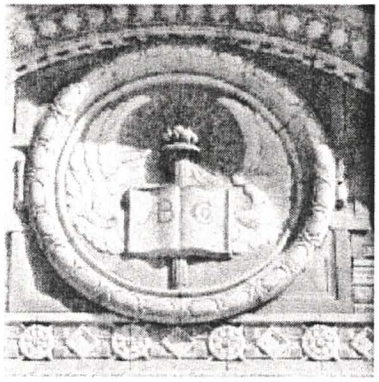
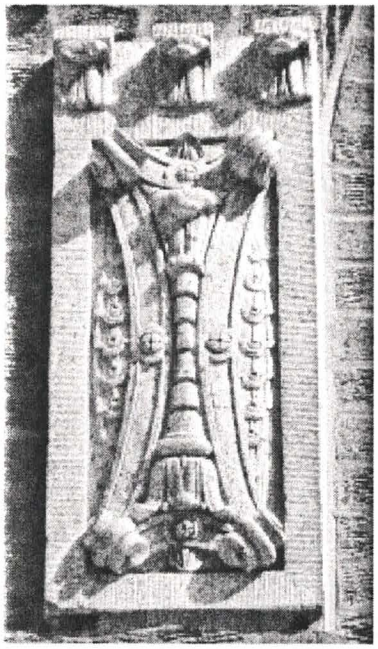
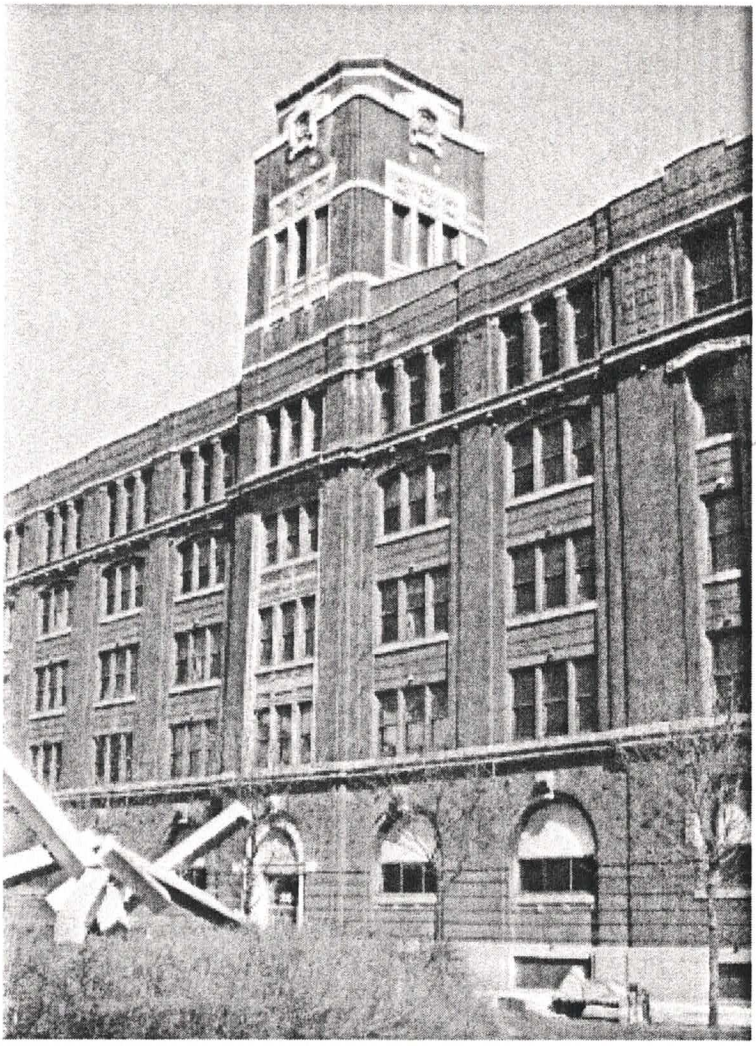
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT







American Book Company Building

320-330 E. Cermak Road/2131 S. Calumet Avenue

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, May 1, 2008

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning
Patricia A. Scudiero, Commissioner

Cover illustration:
The American Book Company Building located at 320 E. Cermak Road.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose ten members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

American Book Company Building

320-330 E. Cermak Road/2132 S. Calumet Avenue

Built: **1912**
Architect: **Nelson Max Dunning**

Topped with a distinctive tower, the American Book Company Building is prominently sited on Cermak Road at its intersection with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the City's Near South Side. The handsome five-story brick factory building was commissioned and built in 1912 as the Midwest offices, warehouse and distribution center of the American Book Company, a nationally-prominent New York textbook publisher. The building features finely-crafted, classically-influenced details in brick, limestone, and terra cotta and was designed by architect Nelson Max Dunning during a period when industrial buildings were increasingly built as fine works of architecture meant to engender civic pride.

By the close of the 20th century, Chicago was a national leader in the publishing and printing industries, with dozens of companies producing everything from mail order catalogs to first-edition books, magazines to mathematics textbooks. The City's impressive transportation network, abundant resources, and ready work force enticed publishers to Chicago. Those who established operations in the city claimed that they could produce books, pay their freight, and sell them throughout the United States for less than books produced elsewhere. The American Book Company Building and its prominent neighbor to the east, the R.R. Donnelley and Sons Co. Calumet Plant (a designated Chicago Landmark); are important reminders of the role that the publishing and printing industries played in the city's manufacturing past.

Publishing in Chicago and the American Book Company

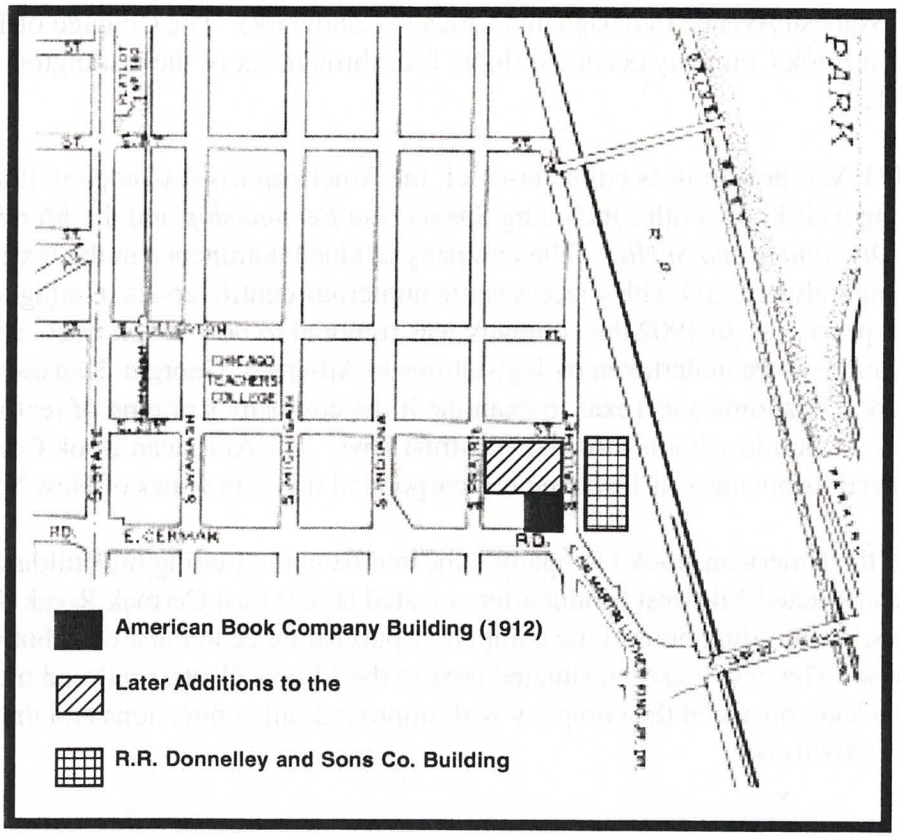
The American Book Company was one of the premiere companies in the textbook publishing industry when it established its Midwest headquarters on Chicago's Near South Side in 1912. Chicago's printing industry gained great prominence in the last quarter of the 19th century as Chicago companies and national businesses established printing operations in the city. Producing a wide variety of publications, including books, magazines, mail-order catalogues, maps and atlases, and textbooks, Chicago's printing industry in 1899 counted more than 9,500 workers and generated revenues of nearly $19 million. By 1914, the industry employed more than 21,000 workers and generated nearly $52 million in printed materials.

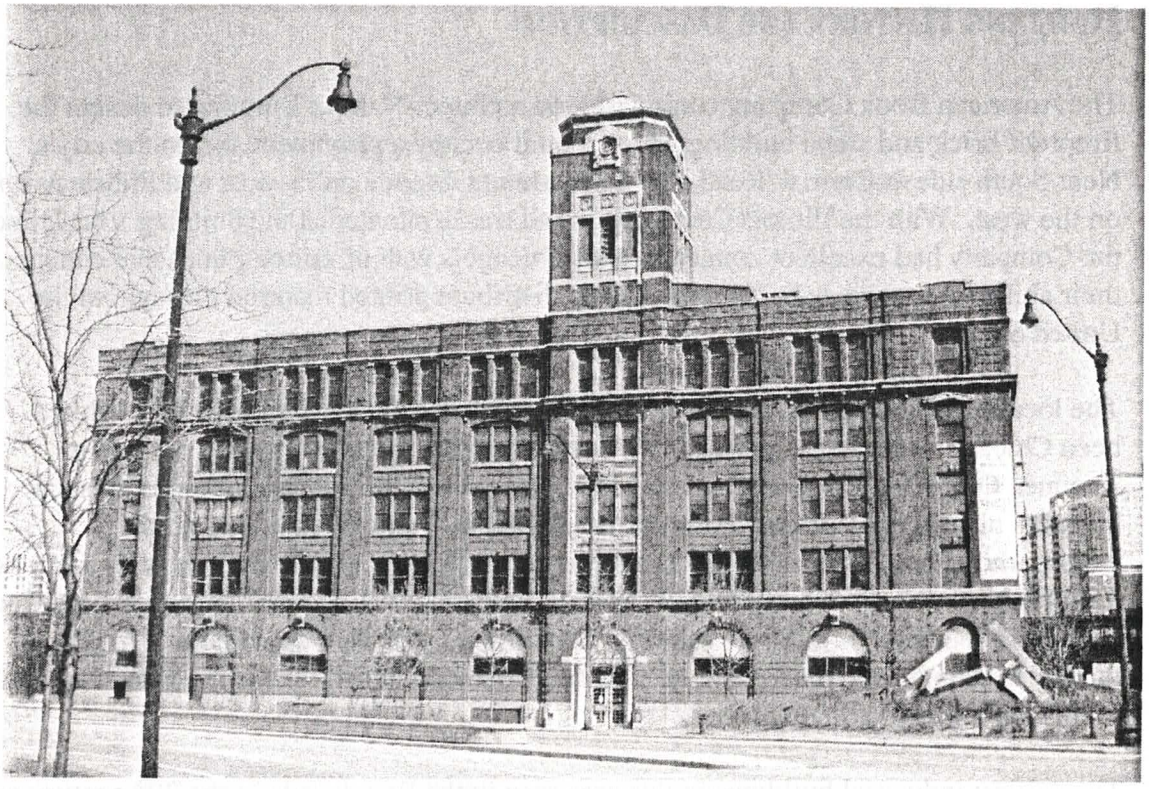
Printing quickly became one of Chicago's most thriving industries. The city's central location—convenient for both the receipt of raw materials and the shipment of finished products—worked in the favor of publishers, including the American Book Company. Chicago's location at the nexus of Great Lakes' shipping and national railroad hubs was attractive to publishers, much as it was for other industries.

In the early 1890s, as Chicago's publishing and printing industries grew in size, the publishers established their businesses on Wabash Avenue, while the majority of printers were situated on Dearborn Street in the South Loop. With the construction of the R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company's Lakeside Press at 731 S. Plymouth Court in 1897, however, the printing and publishing industry became solidly associated with the area now known as "Printing House Row" (a designated Chicago Landmark district).

The American Book Company was formed in 1890 with the consolidation of four of the five largest textbook publishing houses in the Unites States. Before 1890 publishers were generally small businesses that functioned both as printers and booksellers. Economic recession in the 1890s forced many businesses, including publishing and printing companies, to borrow heavily from banks to obtain operating capital. Those companies, in turn, insisted on higher profits that led to greater specialization. In 1889 the School Book Publishers Association consisted of 180 educational publishers, however, the top five publishers: Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co; Ivison, Blakeman & Co.; A.S. Banes & Co.; D. Appleton & Co; and Harper & Brothers, Co. controlled two-thirds of the textbook business nationally.

In an effort to nudge Harper & Brothers out of the top spot in the industry, the remaining four publishers formed an alliance and consolidated the textbook portions of their businesses, merging to form the American Book Company. Of the four merging companies, three were located in New York City and one was based in Cincinnati. The newly-formed American Book Company established its headquarters in New York and maintained offices in Cincinnati and Chicago. In 1891, Mary Ludington Barnes, the wife of the American Book Company's managing director, Charles J. Barnes, commissioned William Le Baron Jenney to construct the eight-story, steel-frame Ludington Building at





The American Book Company Building is located on Chicago's Near South Side at the corner of Cermak Road and Calumet Avenue.

1104 S. Wabash Avenue (a designated Chicago Landmark). The Chicago offices of the American Book Company occupied floors four through six of the Ludington Building until 1912.

With H.H. Vail presiding as editor-in-chief, the American Book Company flourished, producing well-known titles including *Spencerian Penmanship* and the *Merriam Webster School Dictionary and Speller*. The company attained dominance in the textbook publishing industry, and with success came numerous controversies relating to its business practices. In 1902 the company was rumored to be a "book trust" and investigations were undertaken by legislatures in Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma and Texas to examine if the company's pricing of textbook contracts for public schools violated anti-trust laws. The American Book Company reorganized its business in 1907 and reincorporated under the laws of New York.

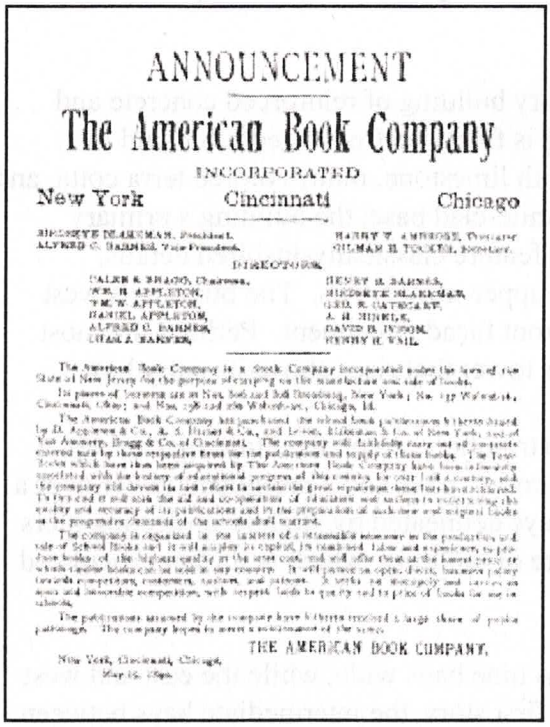
In 1912, the American Book Company relocated from the Ludington Building to its newly constructed Midwest headquarters located at 320 East Cermak Road. In addition to offices, the building housed the company's publishing center and distribution warehouse. The new location, situated next to the Illinois Central railroad tracks and along the lake, provided the company with improved rail connections and the possibility of future expansion.

Building History and Description

The American Book Company commissioned architect N. Max Dunning to design the fireproof brick and stone building which would occupy a prominent site on the city's Near South side at Cermak Road between Calumet Avenue on the east and Prairie Avenue on the west. With the Illinois Central Railroad tracks situated at the building's back door, the Company had excellent connections to Chicago's web of railroad lines that enhanced their ability to receive paper shipments and distribute printed material throughout the United States.

The location of the new distribution center was on the southeastern edge of what had been Chicago's premiere residential 19th-century neighborhood centered on Prairie Avenue. Originally developed in the 1870s through 90s with large mansions by such business magnates as George Pullman, Marshall Field and Phillip Armour, the neighborhood had begun to lose its cache as an exclusive residential enclave by 1910 as families began to move away from Prairie Avenue to new homes in Chicago's Gold Coast neighborhood and North Shore suburbs. Existing houses were demolished for new factory buildings, and the Prairie Avenue neighborhood began to change from residential to industrial and commercial uses.

The earliest industrial buildings in this area rose in the first decade of the 20th century on Indiana Avenue, west of Prairie and Calumet avenues. These were relatively utilitarian buildings on a street that never had the large mansions or social notoriety of either Prairie



ANNOUNCEMENT

The American Book Company

INCORPORATED

New York Cincinnati Chicago

HIRONYM SARGMAN, President.
ALFRED C. BARNES, Vice-President.
HARRY T. AMBROSE, Treasurer.
GILMAN H. TOSTLE, Secretary.

DIRECTORS.

CALEB K. BRAGG, Chairman.
WM. H. APPLETON,
WM. W. APPLETON,
DANIEL APPLETON,
ALFRED C. BARNES,
CHAS. A. BARNES,
HENRY H. BARNES,
HIRONYM SARGMAN,
GEO. R. CATHCART,
A. H. SIEBLE,
DAVID B. TYSON,
HENRY H. VAIL.

The American Book Company is a Stock Company incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey for the purpose of carrying on the manufacture and sale of books.

Its places of business are at Nos. 300 and 310 Broadway, New York; No. 137 Wabash ave., Cincinnati, Ohio; and Nos. 136 and 138 Wabash ave., Chicago, Ill.

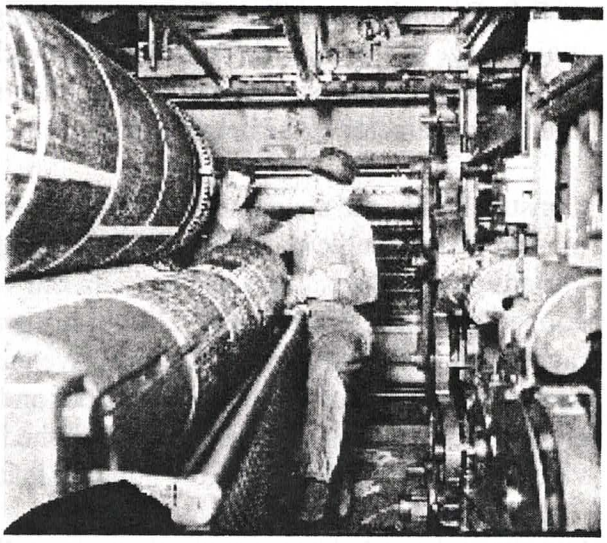
The American Book Company has purchased the school book publications hitherto issued by D. Appleton & Co., A. S. Barnes & Co., and Ivison, Blakeman & Co. of New York, and of Van Antwerp, Bragg & Co. of Cincinnati. The company will faithfully carry out all contracts entered into by these respective firms for the publication and supply of their books. The New Books which have thus been acquired by The American Book Company have been intimately identified with the history of educational progress of this country for over half a century, and the company will devote its best efforts to sustain the great reputation they have achieved. To this end it will seek the aid and co-operation of educators and teachers in every way possible and necessary, of its publications and in the preparation of such new and original books as the progressive demands of the schools shall require.

The company is organized in the interest of a scientific economy in the production and sale of School Books and it will employ its capital, its established facilities, labor and experience, to produce books of the highest quality at the least cost, and will offer them at the lowest prices at which similar books can be sold in any country. It will pursue an open, direct, business policy toward competitors, customers, patrons, and salesmen. It seeks the prosperity and success on honest and honorable competition, with respect both to quality and to price of books for use in schools.

The publications acquired by the company have hitherto received a large share of public patronage. The company hopes to merit a continuance of the same.

THE AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY.

New York, Cincinnati, Chicago,
May 15, 1890.



At the close of the 20th century Chicago was a national leader in the publishing industry. Left: An 1890s newspaper announcement heralding the formation of the American Book Company with offices in New York, Cincinnati and Chicago. Right: By 1914, the printing and publishing industry employed more than 21,000 Chicagoans.

The American Book Company Building (left) and the R.R. Donnelly and Sons Co. Calumet Plant (right) are important reminders of the role of the publishing and printing industries in the city's past.

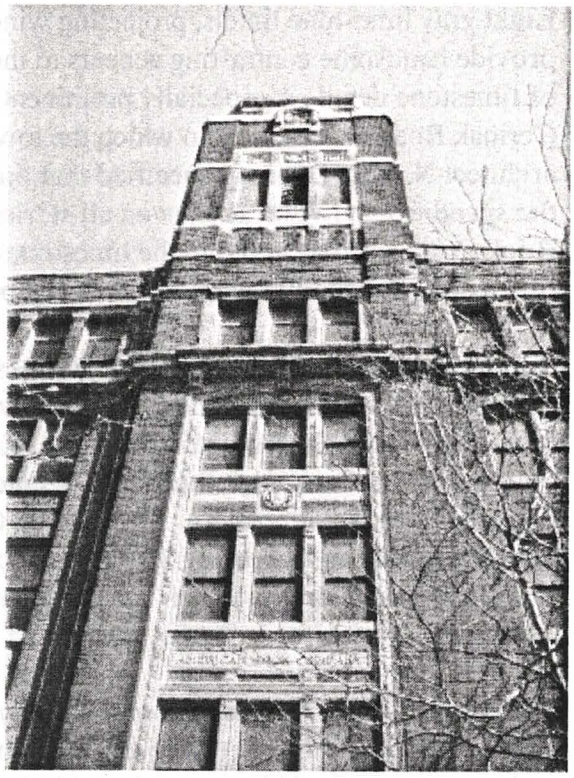
or Calumet. The American Book Company Building and the neighboring Calumet Plant of R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company (a designated Chicago Landmark) were the first major, large-scale industrial buildings in the changing neighborhood. The prominent Cermak Road location, size and fine architectural design of these buildings influenced the changing character of the neighborhood.

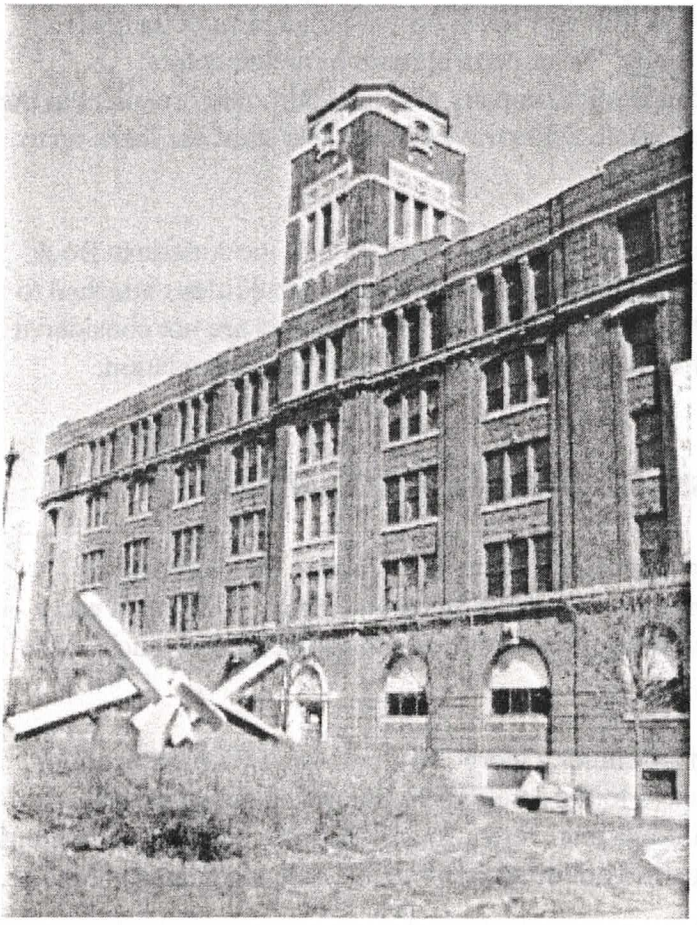
Construction of the rectangular-shaped five-story building of reinforced concrete and masonry was completed in 1912. The building is finely crafted of red brick laid in various decorative patterns and embellished with limestone, multi-colored terra cotta, and copper detailing. Anchored by a light-gray granite-clad base, the building's primary facades on Cermak Road and Calumet Avenue feature classically-inspired details, particularly concentrated on the first floor and upper-most floors. The building's west elevation features a simplified version of the front façade treatment. Perhaps the most visually distinctive feature of the building is its tower that rises above its entry bay.

Despite its intended use as a warehouse and distribution center, the building conveys a sense of Beaux Arts formality, with projecting corner bays and a prominent tower over a classically embellished entrance. Repetitive bays delineated by slightly projecting piers and flat recessed spandrels express the structure of building, which is further articulated by the limestone and terra-cotta ornament.

Overall the main façade facing Cermak Road is nine bays wide, while the east and west elevations are each five bays in width. On the first story, the intermediate bays between the corners and the main entrance have wide, slightly recessed window openings formed with semi-circular arches capped by a terra-cotta scroll keystone. Originally within each arch was a semi-circular transom set atop a row of fixed tripartite windows. The original windows have since been replaced, and white-painted metal panels have been installed in place of the transoms. Four small terra-cotta emblems bearing the form of a raised book, a reference to the building's original owner, are situated beneath the limestone sill of each window. Corner bays feature narrower, slightly recessed arched window openings and are flanked by ornamental terra-cotta panels.

An elaborately-detailed Renaissance-Revival style main entrance to the building is located off center, in the sixth bay below the tower. The decorative door surround is set within a semi-circular arch of brick headers. The door is flanked by fluted pilasters and columns that support a limestone arch carved with a pattern of medallions and flutes. The round-arched decorative panel above the door, known as a tympanum, incorporates a colorful terra-cotta crest representing the American Book Company. At the center of the design is a red and brown torch symbolizing enlightenment with an open book over the handle of the torch. Inscribed in the book is "AB" on the left hand side and "C" on the right for "American Book Company." Surrounding the book and forming a circular pattern are cream-colored wings that represent the flight toward knowledge and enlightenment, contained within a raised terra-cotta wreath set off against a green geometric block pattern. Additional symbols representing intellectual and spiritual illumination are incorporated in the building's terra-cotta ornament, produced by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company of Chicago.





Despite its intended industrial use, the American Book Company Building conveys a sense of formality. Top left: The building's elaborately-detailed entry on Cermak Road. Top right: Limestone and terra-cotta details ornament the central tower bay.

The American Book Company Building was constructed with a reinforced-concrete frame and clad with red brick. Left: The building's repetitive bays delineated by slightly projecting piers express the structure of the building.

Light gray limestone lintels, projecting window hoods on corner bays, and belt courses provide handsome contrasting accents to the rich hues of the red-brick building. The use of limestone details is especially prominent on the slightly-projecting sixth bay of the Cermak Road elevation from which the tower rises. To add visual emphasis to the bay, architect N. Max Dunning specified that limestone details frame the windows and accent the spandrels and vertical piers on all stories within the bay. Additionally, "The American Book Company" is carved in the limestone panel above the second-floor windows. A limestone medallion is set in bands of red brick above the third-floor center window.

Similarly constructed of red brick and limestone, the building's visually-distinctive tower rises nearly three stories in height. The tower hides the factory's water tank and service tanks behind simple geometric detailing. Each elevation of the tower features three vent openings set in decorative limestone. Centered above each vent is a terra-cotta medallion encircled by a wreath pattern. Delineating the top of the tower's parapet wall is a limestone belt course bearing a large terra-cotta medallion crowned with a limestone cap. The final element of the tower, an octagonal structure topped with a metal hipped roof, rises behind the tower's parapet wall.

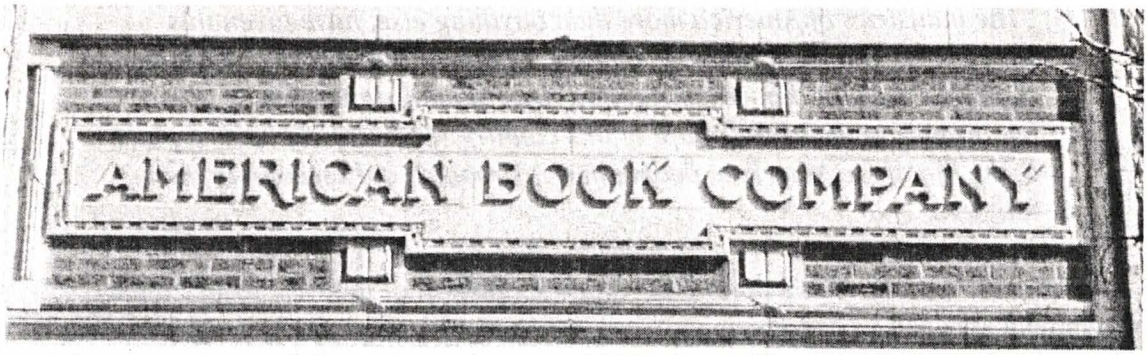
The Cermak Road entrance foyer and lobby present a two-level space designed in the Arts and Crafts style. Accessed at street level, the compact foyer serves as a transition space and accentuates the loftiness of the lobby's ribbed, vaulted ceiling that is ornamented with a plaster cartouche. Dark cherry wood trim and warm brown-toned terra-cotta tiles decorate the walls of the foyer and lobby. Terra-cotta plaques in muted colors representing the logo of the American Book Company provide additional ornament in the lobby. At the center of the lobby, an ornate white travertine marble staircase leads up to the first floor.

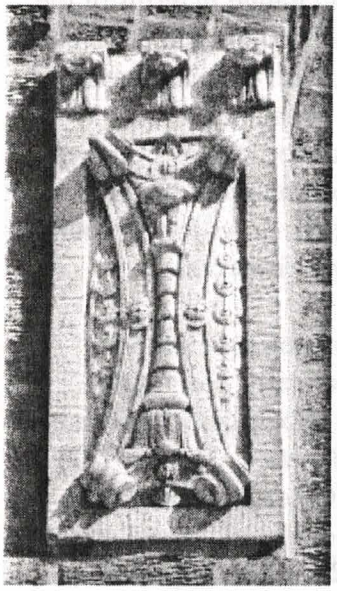
From 1947 to 1958, after its acquisition by R. R. Donnelley & Co., the American Book Company Building was expanded to the north with a series of nine additions attached to the rear elevation of the original 1912 building. These later additions are not considered historically or architecturally significant for the purposes of this recommendation.

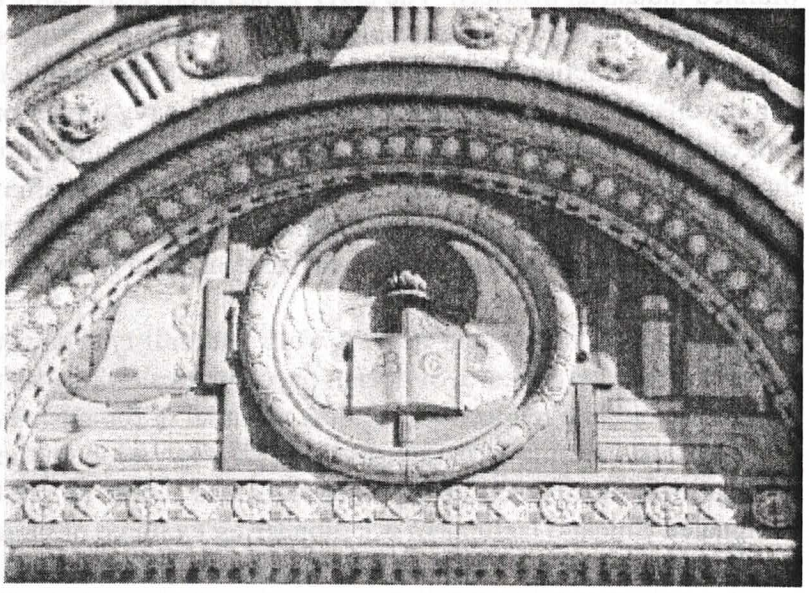
Early 20th Century Industrial Buildings in Chicago

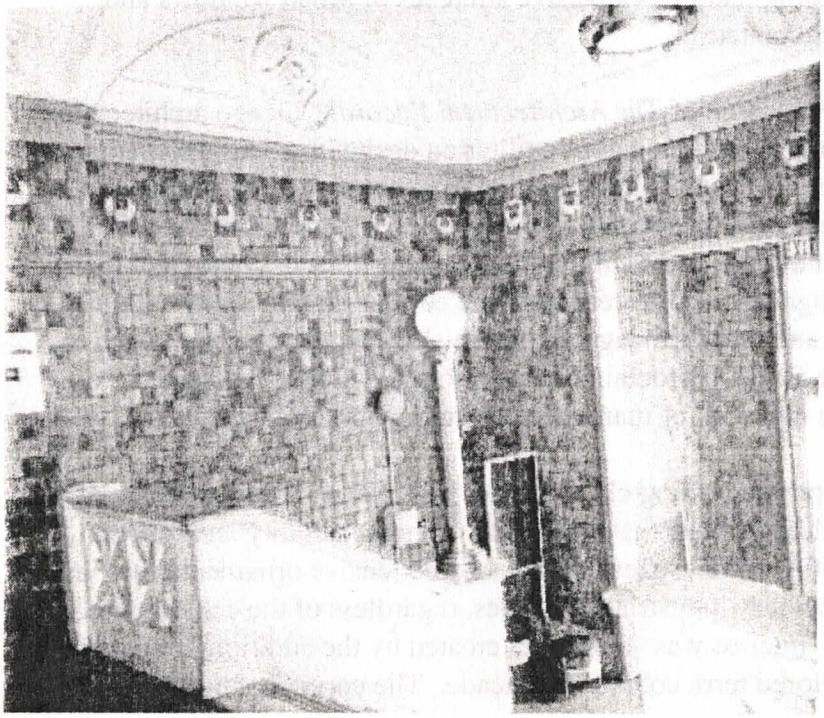
Industrial buildings have played a preeminent role in the economic development of Chicago, a major manufacturing center throughout most of its history. The city's early industrial buildings typically clustered together near transportation corridors such as the Chicago River and railroad lines.

Prominent architects such as Alfred Alschuler, George Nimmons and Richard Schmidt were among those who pushed Chicago to the forefront of industrial design in the early 20th century, creating functional buildings that were also aesthetically pleasing. Nimmons emphasized the significance of industrial buildings in his January 5, 1926, article for *The American Architect*:









Above: Limestone and terra-cotta details identify the building as the historic home of the American Book Company.

Left: The building's compact entrance foyer and lobby present a distinctive two-level space designed in the Arts and Crafts style.

> *"The industries of America more than anything else, have given this country its prominent place among the leading nations of the world, and it is on this account that industrial buildings should stand high in importance in the architecture of this country. Industry occupies a place in the life of the American people that is probably only second to their religion."*

The early 20th century was a period that saw the removal of industry from Chicago's downtown area and its expansion outward into many developing city neighborhoods and planned industrial districts. The early 1900s were also a time of change in terms of the design and structure of industrial buildings in Chicago. Both steel-frame and reinforced-concrete construction challenged the old-style loft construction, with its load-bearing brick walls and an interior structural system of heavy timber or metal. Concrete embedded with steel reinforcement emerged as a common choice for factory buildings throughout the period. As with steel, reinforced concrete offered great tensile and compressive strength, and the material allowed walls with large windows for maximum daylight and good ventilation. Moreover, reinforced concrete was fireproof.

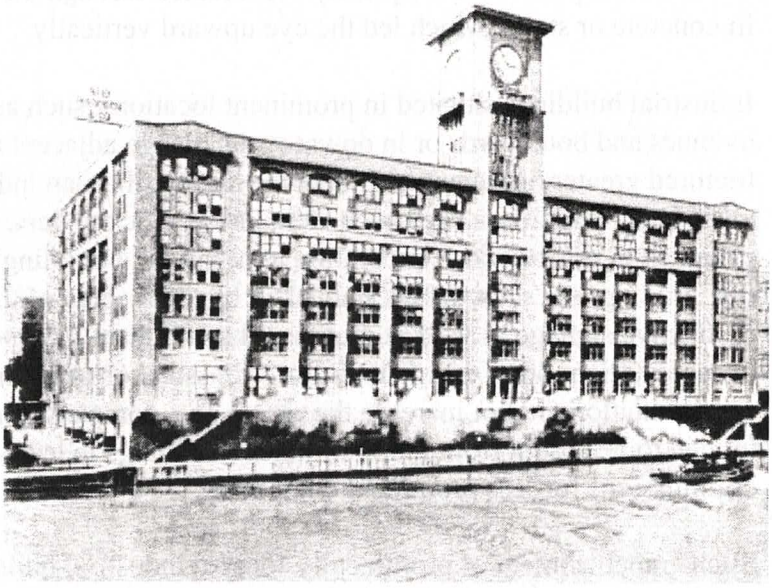
The switch from heavy load-bearing walls and mill-type construction to reinforced concrete provided a wealth of design opportunities. Most dramatically, piers and spandrels could be reduced to the most minimal of dimensions, maximizing the window openings and creating a characteristic "grid" expression on the facades. The 1907-08 Montgomery Ward & Company Catalog House at 600-18 West Chicago Avenue (a designated Chicago landmark) is a pioneering example of large-scale reinforced-concrete construction. Designed by Schmidt, Garden and Martin, the 1.25-million square foot warehouse and office building features expansive stretches of broad windows and naturalistic terra-cotta ornamentation.

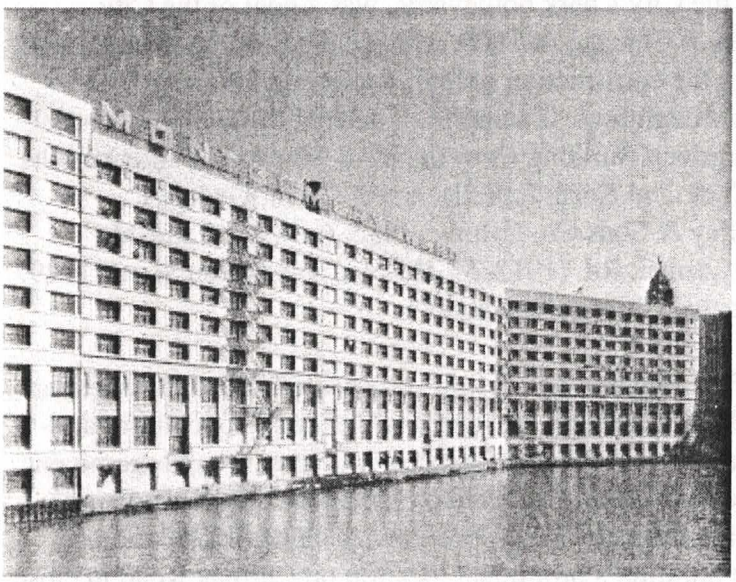
Writing in the February 1910 issue of *The Architectural Record*, Chicago architect Peter Wight argued that the public appreciated good utilitarian design that was unornamented, yet relieved from monotony through its good proportions alone. In the same article, Wight praised the industrial work of several architectural firms, including Alfred Alschuler, Nimmons and Fellows, and Schmidt, Garden and Martin, noting that their work "will at once be recognized as different from the common run of such buildings." Wight believed that these and other Chicago architects shared a common approach to industrial design, going so far as to proclaim the creation of a unified movement "on account of its having been the work of many persons acting almost simultaneously."

The American Book Company Building characterizes this evolution in the design of early 20th-century industrial building as one that expressed strength, stability and function through its grid-like elevations and eschewed the use of extensive ornamentation. In Chicago, most early 20th-century industrial structures, regardless of the construction type, were sheathed with brick. Interest was sometimes created by the addition of contrasting colored brick and light-colored terra cotta to the façade. The corners of buildings and/or

Industrial buildings have played a preeminent role in the economic development of Chicago. These three examples are all designated Chicago Landmarks.

Right: The Reid-Murdoch Building, located at 325 North LaSalle Street, was designed by George C. Nimmons in 1913.





Left: The Montgomery Ward & Company Catalog House, designed by Schmidt, Garden & Martin in 1907-08, is one of the finest industrial examples of the Chicago School style of architecture.

Right: Designed by Howard Van Doren Shaw and Charles Z. Klauder between 1912 and 1929, the R. R. Donnelley & Sons Calumet Plant exemplifies the industrial gothic style.

their vertical piers were frequently accentuated through the use of Classical-style pilasters in concrete or stone, which led the eye upward vertically.

Industrial buildings situated in prominent locations, such as along Chicago's major avenues and boulevards or in downtown Chicago adjacent to the Chicago River, typically featured greater ornamentation than the more utilitarian industrial buildings found elsewhere. Architects used such elements as clock towers, terra-cotta detailing or ornamental brickwork or decoration to highlight a building's prominence. An identity for the building was sometimes established by the display of the firm's logo or name on distinctive signage as well as motifs and symbolism incorporated as part of the ornamentation; other examples feature Classical or other motifs. Since the inclusion of ornamentation did not increase the return on a company's investment in the building, it tended to be absent from more utilitarian buildings in less visible locations and in commissions for less prominent companies.

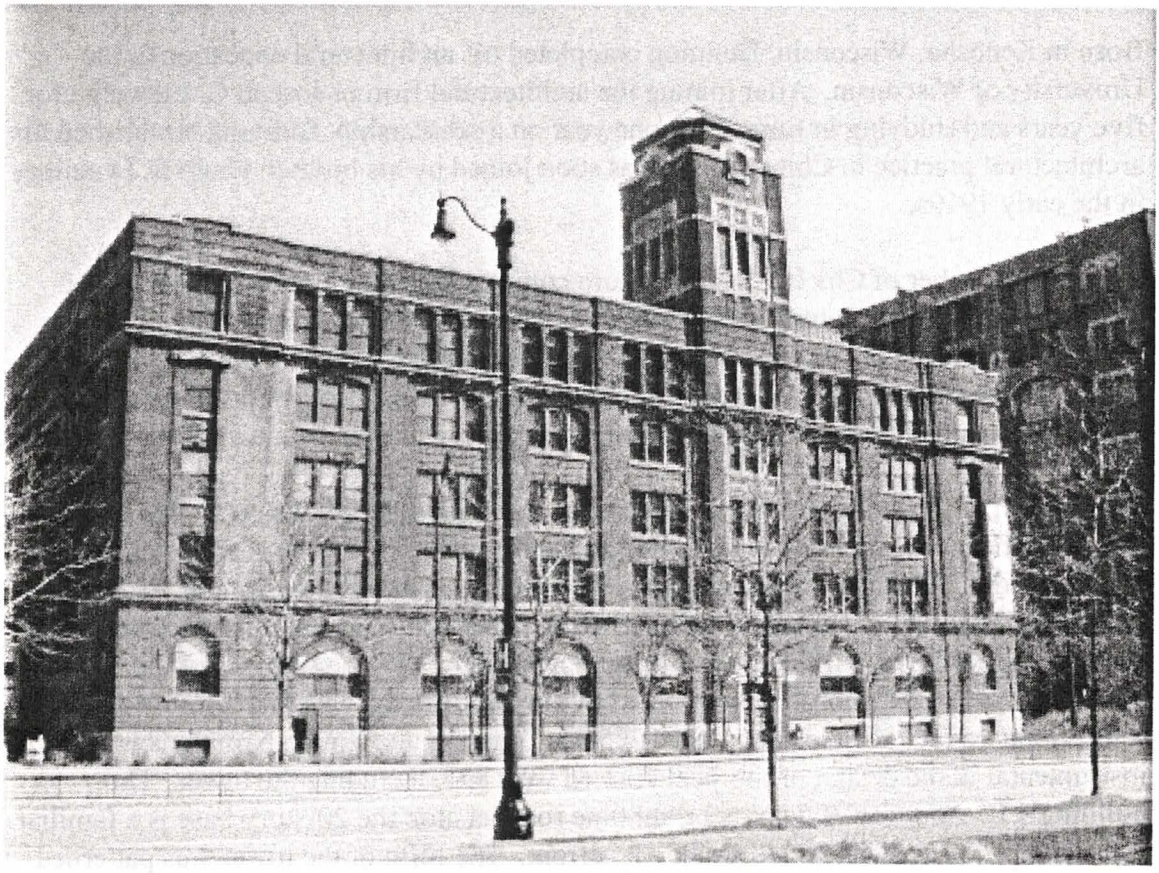
Such embellishment of prominently-located industrial buildings along the Chicago River and important streets, including the City's park boulevards, was a goal of the City Beautiful movement and the Plan of Chicago of 1909, which called for the enhancement of the City's streetscapes through the construction of high-quality architecture both downtown and along outlying thoroughfares. Examples of such high-quality industrial architecture include the Reid-Murdoch Building (now the Reid-Murdoch Center) on the Chicago River between North Clark and North LaSalle streets (1914, George C. Nimmons) and the R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co. Calumet Plant (now the Lakeside Technology Center) at 350 East Cermak Rd. (1912-24, Howard Van Doren Shaw; 1929, Charles Z. Klauder), both designated Chicago Landmarks.

The American Book Company Building exemplifies this progressive trend in American industrial architecture in the early 20th century. Designed with a concrete column-and-girder construction, the American Book Company Building was an early and prominent industrial building that displayed both up-to-date technology and a conscious effort to create a visually attractive building through fine proportions, detailed brickwork, and applied classical ornament. The building's prominent location on Cermak Road in close proximity to the R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company Calumet Plant also encouraged the American Book Company to commission a visually impressive building.

The Factory Tower

Many of Chicago's most prominent industrial buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries shared a common feature: a distinctive, soaring tower. Rising from the bulk of the building, the tower was symbolic of a company's prosperity and prominence in its community, yet it was also functional. Almost always of masonry, the factory tower was square in plan and highly decorative, often accented with clock faces or other ornamentation and housing water tanks that fed into gravity-driven systems used for fire protection and manufacturing. Towers were often integral to a factory's functional design,

The nearly three-story masonry tower of brick, concrete, limestone and terra cotta concealed the building's water tanks and service tanks while providing a striking visual feature.



emphasizing main entries or prominent corners, or aesthetically balancing a long façade. In a city where fire protection concerns transformed building design and construction after the Great Fire of 1871, it is easy to understand how rooftop factory towers began to dominate Chicago's urban landscape.

N. Max Dunning, like many early 20th-century Chicago architects who designed industrial buildings, incorporated an embellished tower in his design of the American Book Company Building. The nearly three-story masonry tower of brick, concrete, and terra cotta hid the factory's water tank and service tanks behind geometric detailing. The tower culminates with an octagonal structure that is capped with a metal hipped roof.

Architect Nelson Max Dunning

The building's architect, **Nelson Max Dunning, FAIA (1874-1946)**, was best known for his progressive yet elegant commercial and industrial buildings throughout the Midwest. His projects were based on a careful study of the requirements of his client, synthesizing architectural technology, utility and aesthetics. For the American Book Company, Dunning designed a building with open, flexible spaces and fireproof construction. Both requirements led him to utilize concrete for the structural elements, in keeping with the work of other progressive Chicago architects of the time such as George C. Nimmons, Alfred Alschuler, and Richard Schmidt.

Born in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Dunning completed his architectural education at the University of Wisconsin. After joining the architectural firm of Joseph C. Llewelyn for five years and studying in Europe for one year on a scholarship, Dunning established his architectural practice in Chicago. He was soon joined by his brother, Hugh B. Dunning, in the early 1910s.

An active member of Chicago's architecture community, Dunning served as the first president of the Architectural League of America and was elected a member of the Chicago Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1915. In 1933, Dunning moved to Washington, D.C., to serve in President Franklin Roosevelt's administration. Dunning remained in the federal government in various capacities until his death in 1945.

While N. Max Dunning's architecture remains throughout North America, one of his most significant commissions in addition to the American Book Company Building is also located in Chicago. In collaboration with architects Henry Raeder and George C. Nimmons, Dunning developed the design of the American Furniture Mart located at 680 N. Lake Shore Drive. At the time of its completion in 1924, the east end of the Furniture Mart was the largest reinforced-concrete building in Chicago with sixteen stories and 1.5 million square feet of floor space. In 1925-26, Dunning along with Nimmons was instrumental in the design of the steel-framed west end, including the tower. The building's 10-story tower with its bright blue roof set atop the 20-story base is a familiar sight along Chicago's Near North Side lakefront. The form of the tower was patterned

In addition to the American Book Company Building, architect Nelson Max Dunning (top right) is also credited with the design of the American Furniture Mart (top left) located at 680 N. Lake Shore Drive and the Fourteenth Church of Christ, Scientist at 4444 N. Paulina Street.

after details of the Houses of Parliament building in London, and the cupola at the top of the tower was originally designed to be a mooring mast for dirigibles. Together, the completed building was the largest of its time.

N. Max Dunning's commercial and factory buildings during the 1910s and 1920s were considered by the contemporary architectural critics of the *American Architect* to be his strongest work. Dunning established a professional specialty in the design of industrial and warehouse buildings. In addition to the American Book Company Building, Dunning also designed several buildings for Canada's largest mail-order house, the Robert Simpson Company, Ltd., including its main building in Toronto and branch houses in Regina and Halifax. During the 1920s, Dunning also designed several large industrial and commercial buildings in Chicago including the Peck and Hills Furniture Company, located at the corner of Bliss and North Branch Streets on Goose Island; the Standard National Bank at 7919 South Ashland Avenue; and the Stromberg Motor Device Building (all demolished).

Dunning is also credited with the design of many single-family residences in the Chicago area. A Craftsman-style residence from 1910 at 4940 South Kimbark Ave. (located in the Kenwood Chicago Landmark District) foretells of Dunning's Arts and Crafts treatment of the American Book Company lobby. Other Dunning-designed residences in Illinois include the Robert J. Thorne Home in Lake Forest, designed with John W. McKecknie; the F.W. Penfield Home in Glencoe; the Stiger residence in Oak Park; the F.C. Traver residence in Kenilworth; and the Robert E. Ward residence and George White residence in Wilmette.

Dunning's other commissions in Chicago reflect a range of building types and architectural styles. Two churches, both from 1917, at 301 North Central Avenue and the Fourteenth Church of Christ, Scientist at 4444 North Paulina Street, are classical in design. The architect's known work after 1930, including the 1933 building for the Chicago Federation of Musicians at 175 West Washington Street, is designed in the Art Deco style.

Later History

In the aftermath of the Depression, the R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company grew at a phenomenal pace. In 1936, while Donnelley sought to expand its operations on Cermak Road, the American Book Company was in a state of financial uncertainty. Forced to cut back its Chicago operations, the American Book Company sold the building at 320 East Cermak Road to Donnelly and opted to relocate its publishing offices to the London Guarantee Building at 360 North Michigan Avenue.

After the acquisition, Donnelly consolidated the bulk of its *Time* magazine and Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog printing operations in the building which became known

as Lakeside Plant 3. In the 1940s, with the development of the rotogravure printing process—a method of engraving an image to a copper cylinder which in turn presses the image onto paper reels—printing presses became larger and more efficient. Consequently, during the period of 1947 to 1958, the building was expanded with a series of nine additions to accommodate the larger presses and to provide additional warehouse space. Also during this time, Plant 3 was connected to the Calumet Plant via an underground tunnel through which stocks of paper rolls were moved into the plant. Additionally, an overhead bridge spanning Calumet Avenue connected the buildings and allowed for the easy transport of printed materials from Lakeside Plant 3 to the Calumet Plant Bindery.

In the decades of the 1950s and 60s, the American Book Company pioneered the creation of educational systems that combined traditional textbooks with audio-visual materials. Despite being acquired in 1966, by Litton Industries, Inc., a California-based electronics producer, the American Book Company continues to publish educational materials today.

Criteria For Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity, as set forth in the the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630).

The following were considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the American Book Company Building be designated a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

- The American Book Company Building, through its historic associations with the American Book Company, a nationally-important textbook publisher, exemplifies the importance of the publishing and printing industries to the economic history of Chicago and the Near South Side neighborhood.

- The American Book Company Building exemplifies the historic development of prominently-located industrial buildings along the Chicago River and important streets, including the City's park boulevards, as part of the City Beautiful movement and the Plan of Chicago of 1909, which called for the enhancement of the City's streetscapes through the construction of high-quality architecture both downtown and along outlying thoroughfares.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The American Book Company Building is a handsome and distinguished example of an early 20th-century modern industrial building¯a building type important to Chicago history and the development of modern architecture.
- The American Book Company Building exhibits high quality, excellent design and craftsmanship through its handsome overall proportions and façade expression; such detailing as light-gray limestone lintels, projecting window hoods on corner bays, and belt courses that provide handsome accents to the rich hues of the red-brick building; and terra-cotta ornament incorporating symbolic references to publishing, knowledge and enlightenment.
- The American Book Company Building also includes a high-quality historic interior with a two-level foyer and vaulted lobby designed in the Arts and Crafts style.
- The American Book Company Building is the work of architect N. Max Dunning, a significant architect in the Midwest, who designed a number of prominent buildings in Chicago.

Criterion 7: Unique Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- The American Book Company Building's prominent and distinctive three-story tower, designed to conceal a water tank, has been a familiar and established visual feature on the Near South side since 1912.
- With the adjacent R.R. Donnelly and Sons Company Building, the American Book Company Building forms a highly distinctive, prominent and unique pairing of high quality and architecturally distinguished industrial buildings.

INTEGRITY CRITERIA

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic value.

The American Book Company Building has excellent physical integrity, displayed through its siting, scale, overall design, and relationship to the surrounding Near South Side community area. The building retains the majority of its historic exterior form,

materials and detailing, including its elaborate entry framed by limestone columns, fine brickwork, stone coursing, decorative terra cotta ornament, and its embellished tower.

Exterior alterations to the original 1912 building are relatively few and include replacement windows at the first floor and metal replacement entrance doors, which are set within the original terra-cotta entrance surround. In addition, street-level windows on the Cermak and Calumet elevations are currently boarded up.

During period of 1947 to 1958, nine later additions were constructed at the rear of the original 1912 building.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based upon its evaluation of the American Book Company Building, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines and all elevations of the tower, of the original 1912 building; and
- the main entrance foyer and lobby, including but not limited to the vaulted lobby ceiling, marble staircase, and balustrade.

With the adjacent R.R. Donnelly and Sons Company Building (center) and the reconstructed facade of the Platt Luggage Company Building (right), the American Book Company Building (left) forms a distinctive ensemble of architecturally distinguished industrial buildings at the prominent intersection of Cermak Road and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

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